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SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR DAS STEPHEN GANYARD'S VISIT TO  
ANGOLA

¶1. (SBU) the Embassy Angola team warmly welcomes your June 14 - 17 visit to Angola. This visit provides an excellent opportunity to witness firsthand the devastating effects of landmine and UXO contamination in Angola and explore the ways in which USG support for humanitarian demining and weapons destruction is helping to build a peaceful, secure, healthy, democratic, and economically prosperous Angola.

#### Overview

¶2. (SBU) Angola's political and military leadership continues to be wary of U.S. intentions, especially concerning Africom and our goals for military engagement with the region in general and with Angola in particular. Increasingly, Angola is taking a larger leadership role in regional peace and security organizations such as the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU).

¶3. (U) Six years after the end in 2002 of a 27-year civil war, Angola is at a pivotal juncture in its development and reconstruction. A democratic, stable, healthy and economically prosperous Angola is vital to both regional stability and prosperity and US national security interests. Our principal goal is to promote a more peaceful, secure, prosperous, democratic, and healthy Angola by strengthening Angola's ability to more efficiently use its vast mineral wealth to improve the well-being of all citizens.

¶4. (SBU) Perhaps the greatest constraint to improving our ties with the Angolan government and the military in particular is our history with Angola. President Dos Santos has publicly chastised the powers that interfered in colonial Angola for not helping rebuild the country after decades of civil war, and he includes the U.S. in that group. Many of Angola's civilian and military leaders fought against rebels backed by the U.S. and blame the U.S. for the suffering inflicted by those rebels on their families. Some Angolans seek to strengthen ties with the U.S., but many others, including the still powerful and influential Minister of Defense, are wary.

#### Military Cooperation

¶5. (SBU) The force strength of the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) is estimated at 110,000 to 120,000 soldiers, of which 2/3 are in the Army and the other 1/3 divided between the Air Force and Navy. The FAA was created through the combination of MLPA and UNITA armed forces at the end of the civil war, and due to field experience and training received throughout the long war is regarded as one of the better African forces. As Angola transitions into a post-conflict force structure, GRA officials are planning to reduce its standing military to between 50,000 and 90,000 personnel. Angola is the head of the peace and security councils of both SADC and the African Union. Angola has welcomed its leadership position on these multi-lateral councils, and is consulting closely with its African neighbors on a wide range of regional security

issues, including the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. These multi-lateral groups are key in forming regional opinion on U.S. involvement on the continent through Africom and in shaping regional responses to diplomatic trouble spots, such as Zimbabwe. Angola has, to date, declined to participate in regional or international peacekeeping operations, citing the need to focus its resources on rebuilding its own war-torn country.

¶6. (SBU) As Angola increases its efforts to become a regional player, bilateral engagement with the U.S. and NATO allies is slowing down (with the exception of Portugal), while engagement with others, notably Israel and Russia, is increasing. Despite promis